

Appl. No. 10/035,681
Amdt. dated November 14, 2003
Reply to Office Action of August 15, 2003

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated August 15, 2003, the drawings were objected to; claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15-20, 27, 29, 30, 32, and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 over U.S. Patent No. 5,680,901 (Gardes); claims 1-3, 16, 22, and 26 were rejected under § 102 over U.S. Patent No. 5,411,082 (Kennedy); and claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10, 12-25, 27, and 29-33 were rejected under § 102 over U.S. Patent No. 5,941,308 (Malone).

The drawing objections have been addressed by the attached replacement drawings.

As amended, the claims are allowable over the cited references. Claim 1 has been cancelled to render the rejection of that claim moot. Claim 2 has been amended into independent form, and as amended, is allowable over either Kennedy or Malone. Neither Kennedy nor Malone discloses a template that has a first engagement member, and a connector that has a second engagement member to engage the first engagement member, with the first engagement member extending generally along a length of the template, and a second engagement member extended generally along a length of the connector.

Claim 7 has also been amended into dependent form, and as amended, is allowable over either Gardes or Malone. Neither Gardes nor Malone discloses a template having a lateral window, a connector adapted to be sealably engaged to the template, and a sealing element between the template and the connector, the sealing element adapted to define a continuous fluid seal path around a periphery of the lateral window. The seals 40, 41, and 42 depicted in Figure 2 of Malone do not provide the continuous seal path around the periphery of a lateral window. The seals 54 and 56 depicted in Figures 2 and 3, and the seal 74 depicted in Figure 4 of Gardes do not provide a continuous seal path around a periphery of a lateral window of a template.

Claim 16 has been cancelled to render the rejection of that claim moot. Claim 18 has been amended into independent form, and as amended, is allowable over Malone or Gardes. Neither Malone nor Gardes discloses a sealing element that defines a continuous fluid seal path around a periphery of a lateral window of a template.

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Claim 22 has also been amended into independent form, and as amended, is allowable over either Kennedy or Malone. Neither Kennedy nor Malone discloses engaging a connector to a template by engaging a first engagement member of the connector to a second engagement member of the template, with the first engagement member extending along a length of the connector, and the second engagement member extending along a length of the template.

Independent claim 29 has been cancelled to render the rejection of that claim moot. Claim 31 has been amended into independent, and is allowable over Malone. Malone does not disclose a junction assembly having a sealing element between a template and a connector to define a continuous fluid seal path around a periphery of a lateral window in the template.

The dependent claims are allowable over the cited references for at least the same reasons as corresponding independent claims. Allowance of all claims is respectfully requested. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 20-1504 (SHL.0143P2US).

Respectfully submitted,

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